

CONSUMER HIGHLIGHTS

June-July 2001

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FCE News

Value Marketing Is Making Americans Fat

Foreign visitors to this country always comment on two things: Portion sizes in our restaurants are huge, and too many Americans are overweight. Is there a connection between the two? Health experts think so, and think we could remedy the problem.

You know what value marketing is. It's selling people more of something for less money. In the food industry, it's when the server says, "For only a quarter more you can have the larger size." It's "value meals," "super sizes" and "oversized" packaging.

Value marketing makes sense for the food industry. Restaurateurs, for instance, can give customers value either by cutting prices or putting more food on the plate. "When it comes to a choice between cutting prices by a dollar or giving people about thirty cents extra food, it's pretty much a no-brainer," says marketing expert Dr. John L. Stanton.

But more food or less money has an inescapable downside: It shifts the pressure from our wallets to our waistbands.

The problem is devouring all that extra food. USDA figures show that we are eating an additional 148 calories per day, on average, than we were twenty years ago. That increase may seem insignificant at first, but it could work out to an extra 15 pounds per year.

Today 55 percent of American adults are clinically overweight, and one in every four adults is obese (severely overweight). For the first time in history, most of the American population

is at increased risk for obesity related diseases like certain cancers, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease and osteoarthritis.

What Can You Do?

As long as Americans rate "value" over "health," the food industry will continue to spend billions of dollars on value marketing. It won't stop until the customer speaks up.

"In supermarkets, restaurants and coffee shops, tell them you don't want more for less. Tell them you want less for less — less food for even less money. You want a meal you can finish without feeling stuffed," says AICR Director of Nutrition Education, Melanie Polk, RD.

When given the option, customers can always order the small size. "Make it a rule to ask for the smallest portion available. Always say small, say half or share," Polk suggests. Choosing the regular burger instead of the quarter-pound size saves about 160 calories. Ordering a cup of cream of mushroom soup instead of a bowl could eliminate a whopping 180 calories, cutting the total by half. Pushing your plate away after just one cup of pasta on a three-cup platter saves almost 300 calories.

"At table service restaurants, divide the meal with a knife before you start eating and ask the waiter for a doggie bag," Polk says.

Walton County Family &
Consumer Sciences
Newsletter

FDA Advises Consumers About Fresh Produce Safety

The Food and Drug Administration is advising consumers to be aware of safe handling and preparation practices for fresh fruits and vegetables. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that the occurrence of foodborne disease increases during the summer months for all foods, including fresh produce.

Foodborne illness can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons with foodborne illness can experience fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Following are some steps that consumers can take to reduce the risk of foodborne illness from fresh produce:

- ? At the store, purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged. If buying fresh cut produce, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- ? At home, chill and refrigerate foods. After purchase, put produce that needs refrigeration away promptly. (Fresh whole produce such as bananas and potatoes do not need refrigeration.) Fresh produce should be refrigerated within two hours of peeling or cutting. Leftover cut produce should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- ? Wash hands often. Hands should be washed with hot soapy water before and after handling fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood, as well as after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.

? Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables with cool tap water immediately before eating. Don't use soap or detergents. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before eating.

? Wash surfaces often. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops should be washed with hot soapy water and sanitized after coming in contact with fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Sanitize after use with a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water.

? Don't cross contaminate. Use clean cutting boards and utensils when handling fresh produce. If possible, use one clean cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. During food preparation, wash cutting boards, utensils or dishes that have come into contact with fresh produce, raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Do not consume ice that has come in contact with fresh produce or other raw products.

? Use a cooler with ice or use ice gel packs when transporting or storing perishable food outdoors, including cut fresh fruits and vegetables.

Following these steps will help reduce the risk of foodborne illness from fresh produce.

FDA Talk Paper –
May 2000





Smart Gifts for Graduates

Before you hand your new college graduate an envelope full of cash to celebrate their accomplishments, consider that the average student will leave school with much more than a diploma. According to student loan provider Nellie Mae, 78% of all graduates have at least one credit card and \$2,748 in debt – up 46% from just three years ago. Nine percent have more than \$7,000 in credit card debt and, more importantly, potentially damaged Credit Reports that could make securing a future car or Home Loan more difficult and expensive.

One of the best – and easiest – ways to help your new graduate Start out on Solid Financial Ground is to give them a Money Management Program which they can use to track everything from their checking and savings accounts to their investments and student loans.

Family and Consumer
Sciences Hotline – 6/7 '01

Character Matters

Do you want to earn trust and protect your most important leadership tool? If so, try the following:

- ? Keep your promises. You don't have to promise things just to make someone feel good. Just keep the

promises you do make and people will trust what you say.

- ? Speak out for what you think is important. If someone has to guess how you feel about something, they may guess wrong. Save them the trouble and tell them how you feel and why. They'll respect you much more.
- ? Err on the side of fairness. Be fair to everyone. Sometimes you have to make difficult decisions that affect many people. All anyone asks of you is that you be fair at all times - regardless of the type of decisions you have to make.
- ? Do what you say you are going to do. Just let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' mean no. When you're going to do something, others should be able to consider it done.

Family and Consumer
Sciences Newsletter – 5/01

Open Sesame: Seeds Supply Treasure Trove of Nutrients

Good things come in small packages. Take seeds. They are a powerhouse of nutrients, including vitamin E, folate, magnesium, copper, manganese and fiber. Moreover, seeds are one of the best vegetarian sources of protein, iron and zinc. Sesame seeds are particularly high in calcium.

Of course, seeds, like nuts, are full of fat—and, thus, calories. The key to healthful consumption is moderation. Eat several servings of seeds a week, up to 1 ounce a day. (One ounce is about ¼ cup of ground or hulled kernels.)

Sow Your Seeds Well

Sprinkle seeds over salads, cereals and pasta; use in stir-fries; add to trail mix and yogurt. Top home-baked breads with sesame seeds.

- Add ground seeds—like flaxseed—to smoothies and to bread, muffin and pancake batter and cookie dough.

- Toast your own pumpkin or squash seeds in the oven (place in a single layer on a shallow pan and bake 10 to 25 minutes at 350°F.).
- Store seeds away from heat, light and humidity to delay rancidity. Refrigerate or freeze to extend storage life.

How Seeds Stack Up Nutritionally

(Seeds are listed alphabetically. Serving size is one ounce. "Good source" denotes that one ounce provides at least 10% of the Daily Value. Vitamin E values were not available for most seeds.)

Seed	Calories	Protein (grams)	Fat (grams)	Fiber (grams)	Good Source (in order of amount present):
Flaxseed , ground	140	5.5	10	8	Magnesium, folate, copper, iron
Pumpkin and squash seeds , whole, roasted	126	5	5.5	4	Magnesium, zinc, copper
Pumpkin and squash seeds , shelled kernels, roasted	148	9	12	4	Manganese, magnesium, iron, copper, zinc
Sesame seeds , kernels, dried	165	7.4	15	3	Copper, manganese, calcium, magnesium, iron, thiamin, zinc, B6
Sunflower seeds , shelled kernels, dry roasted	165	5.5	14	3	Vitamin E, selenium, manganese, copper, pantothenic acid, folate, B6, niacin, zinc

Environmental Nutrition – 4/01

Gardener's Corner

The biggest news in gardening is the weather. We are into our third year of drought, and cold night temperatures through May have us off to a slow start.

There is still plenty of time for a successful year. Following are some tips.

In the Garden – June/July

? Plant only heat tolerant flowers such as Zinnias, Mexican heather, Lantana, Pentas and Coleus.

? Lightly fertilize annuals with a complete fertilizer.
 ? Deadhead spent blooms of Crapemyrtle and flowering annuals in order to encourage repeated flowering.
 ? Watch for chinch bug damage in St. Augustine lawns and treat if needed.
 ? (June) Plant seeds of lima beans, okra, sweet potato plants and Southern peas.
 (July) Sow seeds to start transplants of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and collards.

? Use preventative sprays containing approved fungicides in order to control black spot on roses.

Heat Zone Map Available

The American Horticultural Society began publishing the Plant Heat Zone Map in 1997. Since that time, it has proven to be of great value to many gardeners.

The map divides the country into 12 zones, based upon the number of days that the daily high temperature reaches or exceeds 86 degrees F.

Information contained within the map will hopefully soon enable us to purchase plants that are labeled for specific zones (heat and cold) within the United States.

The American Horticultural Society is located at George Washington's River Farm. Heat Zone Maps can be ordered from the Society at a cost of \$10 each. The address is: AHS, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22308-1300. Telephone: 1-800-777-7931.

Soil Solarization

Plant parasitic nematodes are common soilborne pests found infesting the roots of many garden plants. There are several nematode species that damage roots by stunting, galling and generally preventing normal function. As populations increase, plants gradually become less productive and can be killed. Annual beds and vegetable gardens are especially vulnerable to heavy soil nematode populations.

Until a few years ago, nematicides were available for controlling these pests. These products, when applied properly, often reduced populations to a

level that allowed for the growing of healthy plants.

Presently there is no nematicide that can be recommended for controlling nematodes in the home garden. Instead, we are left with several cultural practices that help to manage these pests at acceptable levels.

Soil Solarization is a practice that heats the soil to a level that kills some nematodes, weed seeds and disease organisms. It works best during June and July in smaller areas such as annual flower and vegetable beds.

The steps required to "solarize" an area:

- ? Remove all plant parts including roots, sticks and other debris.
- ? Till the area deeply and thoroughly.
- ? Moisten the soil to a depth of 8 inches.
- ? Cover the area with a sheet of clear (not black) plastic film. Stretch the film tightly and seal by trenching around the outside, burying and covering the edges with soil.
- ? Keep the area covered for 6 to 8 weeks. Temperatures can rise to approximately 140 degrees F.
- ? Remove the covering and plant when ready.

Note: Some plastic films will not last the required amount of time for adequate solarization. Ultraviolet light causes cracking, which reduces the effectiveness of the treatment.

A second sheet of plastic should be applied over the first at the first sign of cracking.

Though special film is available, it is a specialty product and might be difficult to purchase in the relatively small quantity needed for non-commercial use.

Dan Mullins
Horticulture Agent

RECIPES

Spinach Lasagna

Ingredients:

2 tsp. olive oil
 1 8-oz. can "no salt added" tomato sauce
 ¼ tsp. pepper
 2 tsp. olive oil
 1 10 oz. package fresh spinach, washed, stemmed, and chopped (or 1 10-oz. package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed to remove excess liquid)
 12 oz. 1% fat cottage cheese (or 12 oz. reduced-fat ricotta cheese)
 Nonstick baking spray
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 16-oz. can diced tomatoes
 ½ tsp. oregano
 ¼ c. chopped onions
 8 oz. uncooked lasagna noodles
 ¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese
 8 oz. shredded part-skim Mozzarella cheese

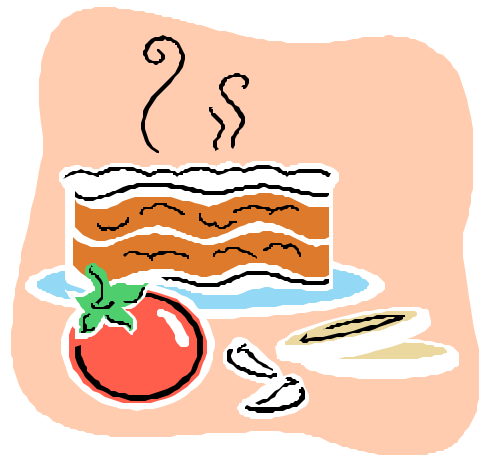
Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly coat baking dish with nonstick spray.
2. In large saucepan over low heat, saute garlic in 2 teaspoons olive oil over low heat for 1 minute. Do not let garlic brown. Add tomato sauce and tomatoes, pepper and oregano. Simmer gently over low heat, uncovered, while preparing other ingredients.
3. In large skillet over low heat, saute onions in remaining 2 teaspoons olive oil, stirring constantly, until onions are transparent but not brown. Add chopped spinach, stirring constantly to separate and heat spinach.

4. Layer uncooked lasagna noodles, sauce, spinach mixture, cottage cheese, and mozzarella in baking pan. Repeat, using all ingredients, ending with a layer of sauce. Sprinkle top with Parmesan cheese.
5. Cover baking dish tightly with foil. Bake for one hour at 375° or until lasagna noodles are cooked. (If noodles are cooked before assembling lasagna, bake uncovered and reduce baking time to 25 minutes.)
6. Lasagna can be assembled and froze, uncooked. To prepare lasagna that has been frozen, defrost in refrigerator for 3-4 hours, and then bake, covered, for 1½ hours or more. Lasagna is done when cheese in center is melted, all noodles are cooked, and casserole is very hot all the way to the center.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 263	Sodium: 508 mg
Carbohydrate: 26g	Protein: 19g
Fat: 9 g	
Exchanges: 2 Lean Meats, 1 Starch, 2 Vegetables, and ½ Monounsaturated Fat	



Pepper and Squash Gratin

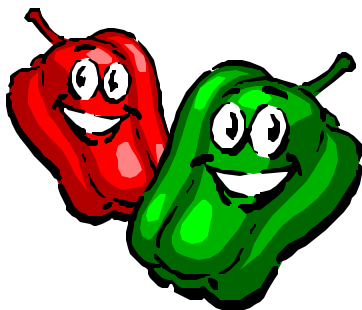
12 oz. russet potato, unpeeled
 8 oz. yellow squash, thinly sliced
 8 oz. zucchini, thinly sliced
 2 c. frozen pepper stir-fry, thawed
 1 tsp. dried oregano leaves
 ½ tsp. salt
 Black pepper to taste
 ½ c. grated Parmesan cheese or
 shredded reduced-fat sharp Cheddar
 cheese
 1 Tbsp. butter or margarine, cut into 8
 pieces

Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat 12X8-inch glass baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pierce potato several times with fork. Microwave at HIGH (100%) 3 minutes; cut into thin slices.

Layer half of potatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, pepper stir-fry, oregano, salt, black pepper and cheese in prepared baking dish. Repeat layers and top with butter. Cover tightly with foil; bake 25 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Remove foil and bake 10 minutes longer or until lightly browned.
Makes 8 servings

Nutrients per Serving: Calories: 106, Calories from Fat: 26%, Total Fat: 3 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Protein: 4 g, Carbohydrate: 15 g, Cholesterol: 8 mg, Sodium: 267 mg, Fiber: 2 g, Iron: <1 mg, Calcium: 79 mg, Vitamin A: 34 RE, Vitamin C: 10 mg, Sugar: 3 g

Dietary Exchanges: 1 Starch, ½ Fat



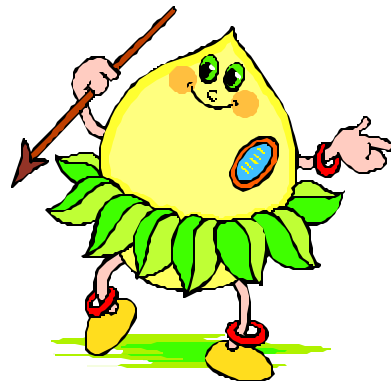
Creamy Lemonade Pie

Plan ahead...needs to chill

"This luscious lemon pie looks quite elegant for an Easter dinner, yet it requires little effort," notes Carolyn Griffin of Macon, Georgia. "Guests will never suspect they're eating a quick-and-easy dessert."

1 can (5 oz.) evaporated milk
 1 pkg. (3.4 oz.) instant lemon
 pudding mix
 2 pkgs. (8 oz. each) cream
 cheese, softened
 ¾ c. lemonade concentrate
 1 graham cracker crust (9 inches)

In a mixing bowl, combine milk and pudding mix; beat on low speed for 2 minutes (mixture will be thick). In another mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Gradually beat in lemonade concentrate. Gradually beat in pudding mixture. Pour into crust. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Yield: 6-8 servings.



The use of trade name in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product names and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Bowman, R.D., L.D.
Extension Agent IV
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